

Elizabeth Godfrey

20th September 2023

U.S. District Judge Ann M. Donnelly

Eastern District of New York
225 Cadman Plaza
East Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear Ms. Donnelly,

Doug and I grew up six years apart and as children he was a very sweet and inclusive older brother. As young adults we chose divergent paths with our respective higher educations - and I believe our university environments largely influenced who we became at that time. While we both faced internal challenges during those years, we had starkly opposite identities and life perspectives. This led to us drifting apart and having a strained relationship.

When Doug was exposed for his internet alias in 2018 it was a defining moment in the course of his life and our larger family dynamics. I was disturbed and angry, and felt convinced that he was a "bad guy." After all, that's the mindset I had developed from my hyper liberal circles of influence.

Immediately Doug went to an extended inpatient rehabilitation center, followed the 12 steps program, and devoted himself to the Catholic faith. It took some time for me to choose to participate in his healing journey and make amends. I believed that anyone was capable of change and I knew it would be hypocritical and downright inhumane if I weren't to practice what I preach and extend this open mindedness toward my brother.

As we began to communicate with each other about our lives and especially the past, an understanding was born, which grew. It surprised me how easy this understanding was achieved. After years of there being distance and even negativity between us, I found myself actually being an intermediary between Doug and some extended family

members. I was earnest in my efforts to help anyone with curiosity to see the larger picture.

What I found from Doug's story between 2018-2020 were two truths. First, it often takes experiencing an incredibly challenging life event to catalyze lasting and dramatic change in oneself. Second, those who haven't undergone such a transformation often have a very difficult time accepting it in others.

Despite our prior differences, which were vast, Doug and I had the good fortune of having both made pronounced changes in how we relate to ourselves and the world.

When Doug was arrested in 2021 I wanted to help in whatever way I could so I helped to launch his legal defense fund. Soon thereafter I became pregnant and wasn't able to play as active a role as I would have liked to. I traveled to Florida to visit him and his girlfriend (now wife) Ines that spring.

Doug went above and beyond hosting me for that visit and it was reminiscent of the way I felt around him as kids: like someone was really looking out for me. He made sure to fill our time with things that I would enjoy, like walking around Japanese gardens; he cooked lots of food for me; held open every door; and took me to his place of worship. But what I really noticed was his relationship with Ines. There was a sweet, playful quality to their relationship and his behavior toward her made it really clear to me the kind of man he had become.

Since then we've been able to commune for each of our respective weddings and it has been a real joy to continue a solid relationship with my brother. At Doug's wedding, I got to see the way Ines' nephew looks up to him with respect and adoration as a male role model. Doug is expecting a baby in November and I love being able to share in our core values of loyalty, family, and faith.

It is so clear to me that Doug's dark days have passed. It may not be as evident to those who aren't close family and friends but Doug has put a tremendous amount of time and effort into making amends for the consequences of his words online - from a chapter which is long over.

May he be able to move forward with all the goodness in his life that he has worked so hard to create. May he

have the invaluable opportunity and right to be present
as a father for his son's first years.

Please, Ms. Donnelly, consider this letter when
deliberating Doug's sentence.

Elizabeth Jade Godfrey